

A Comparative Sketch

OF

ENGLAND AND ITALY,

WITH DISQUISITIONS

ON NATIONAL ADVANTAGES,

IN TWO VOLUMES.


VOL. II.

*Srenua nos exercet inertia: navibus atque
Quadrigis petimus bene vivere. Quod petis, hic est;
Est Ulubris, animus si se non deficit æquus.* HOR.

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In the SECOND VOLUME.

- Page 16 line 16—for *speſtable*, read *ſpectacle*.
17 l. 7—for *frequently*, read *at firſt*.
24 l. 13—for *reéllemnt*, read *réellement*.
39 l. 1—for *ſolamenta*, read *ſolamente*.
90 l. 14—for *body* read *bodies*.

✕✕  Among the Italian and French *Quotations*, ſome few *Accents* are miſplaced upon the *Vowels*, Errors which it is difficult to avoid in an Engliſh Preſs.

A Comparative Sketch, &c.

THE Italians are, to speak of them in general, a people so much addicted to pleasure, that it seems strange to recollect the large fortunes formerly acquired in commerce, by many Patrician families of GENOA

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and VENICE. The laws of ITALY are also many of them so radically bad, and more of them so shamefully administered, that it is almost wonderful to conceive how foreign merchants will trust their property in a country, where, besides all the chicanery which is inseparable from an Italian dealer, there are local disadvantages not generally known; for example, in many parts of ITALY, when a man enters business with a tolerable fortune, and (by those contingencies to which he is liable) is unfortunate, and becomes a bankrupt; he claims his *effetti patri-*

trimonial *stabili e mobili*, or all his patrimonial property; and the residue of his effects goes to the payment of his creditors.

The manifold abuses resulting from this shameful law, must be obvious to every person who considers it fully; and it will be needless to enlarge upon the iniquitous consequence of it.

As another flagrant instance of *Italian jurisprudence*, we may remark, that in some parts of that country, no man after having attained the age of seventy, is under any legal force to pay debts he may contract.* This

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advanced state of life protects him from arrest and imprisonment; and (however the principle might have originated in a consideration of the infirmity and imbecility incident to old age) the enormous knaveries, to which it gives birth, constitute a sufficient proof of its practical injustice. —And here we may observe, with propriety, the upright and impartial conduct which characterizes an English court of judicature;—where foreigners and natives experience an equal distribution of justice;—where a judge explains the law, who besides being independent of the Crown, has a salary

lary which renders him superior to the possibility of being influenced by a bribe ;—and a jury returns the verdict, from whom the parties interested may erase the name of any one they may deem personally inimical to them : It must be eminently remarkable to an Italian, who has been accustomed to consider the arbitrary administration of laws affecting property, in the hands of judges, possessing, probably, in virtue of their office, sixty ducats, or crowns per month.

This

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This is absolutely the case in several parts of ITALY, and it cannot be a matter of surprize, that justice flows so corrupt, when we reflect on the small concern, that the different States take to preserve the purity of its source; or, we may perhaps say, upon good grounds, that from the many territorial divisions of that country, the States themselves are separately too poor to allow the magistrate an income adequate to the dignity of the place he holds.

The result of this, in the nature of things, must be hostile to the course of equity;

equity ; for while men feel themselves in the rank of an exalted office, and have not the means of supporting its external splendour in themselves, the temptation of a *douceur* from the successful party may influence their decision. Many Englishmen, who have had law-suits in Italian courts, can well attest the truth of this inference by fatal experience, and to try the issue of a dispute at common law there, seldom or ever terminates but in the loss of the foreign plaintiff, either by a positive decree against him, or by such a tedious and insufferable

ferable procrastination, as nearly amounts to the same thing.

The latter is a prominent feature of almost all the laws of Europe; and, though the rapacity of interested Practitioners, make an ill use of it; a certain degree of deliberative delay is so necessary to decisions in judicial proceedings, that, in a national point of view, it is scarcely possible to be avoided. To a man who has a cause depending, it seems the height of cruelty, to keep him in a perpetual state of hope and fear: his own impatience shews him, with exaggeration, all the

the inconveniencies of the tardy hand of justice ; and prevents him from seeing the general expediency of it.

It is not intended here to justify, or extenuate any abuses, which may have crept into some courts of judicature of this kingdom.

All human institutions are susceptible of abuse, and a *fungus* springs from most things in nature. Amidst the advantages of cross-examination, which BLACKSTONE justly defines to be the best system possible, ‘ for eviscerating the truth ’ : how frequently

quently does this degenerate into what is termed *brow-beating*? A practice, which calls loudly for reformation, or regulation, and which tends only to embarrass the witness, to pervert truth, and to obstruct the course of justice.

But there is a wide distinction to be drawn, between the abuses of English, and Italian civil law. Almost all those of the former are extraneous, and adventitious; and almost all of the latter, as it has been already observed, have the original cause of cor-

ruption

ruption in the defective means of their administration.

Few dissertations upon national laws deserve a larger share of encomium than BLACKSTONE'S COMMENTARIES on the Laws of ENGLAND. They are admirably suited to instruct, and to please; to trace from primary principles, the existence of each law, and to shew the abundant advantages resulting from them separately and collectively. It is, however, to be regretted, that this author, in his apologetic zeal for the code of

ENGLAND, refrained from *free strictures* on its jurisprudence.

The laws, as well as the constitution of this kingdom, are fortunately susceptible of emendations, without hazarding the general beauty of their structure.

An instance of parliamentary wisdom, is particularly evident in giving lately a greater latitude to the decision of juries, respecting libels: it is highly honourable to the present legislature of GREAT-BRITAIN; and will form

an interesting epoch in the annals of her liberty.

This is a recent pledge of candour and liberality, which gives one reason to hope, that our *penal laws* will soon be the object of its investigation. No man can imagine that a theft of any valuable of forty shillings, is equal in moral turpitude to a *murder*; and yet both by the *existing* laws, are considered as constituting felony, and deserving the same punishment of death.

It will be here observed, that a discretionary power of modifying the
pu-

punishment, is lodged with the Judge; but it may be also observed, with equal propriety, that every instance, in which it is exercised, conveys a direct censure on the written law.—

We must also take into consideration, the fallacious hopes such practices *may* inspire, and the little terror of a sentence of death, which is known to be so frequently commuted. And even admitting, that this is often mitigated by judicial clemency; our public executions are much too common, to have a strong and striking force on the mind of man. That the frequency of this spectacle, lessens
its

its influence upon the lower classes of mankind, it certainly will not be difficult to evince, and for a general proof, let us take a single example.

To mark the ordinary effect of a sentence of death pronounced upon a criminal, we find him frequently thunder-struck, and thrown into an apparent suspension of feelings. His HEART is palsied, and his TONGUE has lost its utterance.—The MAGNITUDE of his MISERY is reserved for him, till he is conducted to the CONDEMNED CELL! 'Tis *then* his reason recovers its wonted powers,—

'Tis *then* he reflects on the short time of his existence in this world. *This* is the period of *his agony*—AN AGONY so intense, that he soon becomes incapable of supporting it ; and his HARASSED MIND SINKS FROM ANGUISH INTO STUPEFACTION.—The tremendous moment of execution arrives ;—we see the OBDURATE EXECUTIONER, and the MELANCHOLY VICTIM ;—the one inaccessible to a ray of commiseration ;—the other no longer an object of it ;—he has drunk his cup of affliction to the last dregs—his frame is exhausted.

What

What then can the people perceive of his sufferings?

A WITHERED FORM, WITH THE RUINS OF A HUMAN COUNTENANCE, which has been so forcibly the INDEX OF DESPAIR, that the IMPRESSION continues, though the SENSATION be past. They view him one minute pale, trembling, obedient;—and the next—after a few convulsions of nature—A LIFELESS EXPIATION OF HIS CRIME.

Let us now attend to its *effect*, and we shall find, that the populace, who

have only witnessed his *physical* sufferings, contemplate with diminished horror a public execution. They see, that this transition from life to death is not so torturing as their exaggerating fears had depicted; and they *may* conjecture that this is not so great an affliction as *indigence itself*. —Hence the disadvantage of their too often viewing this awful scene.

They know, that men, in the midst of opulence, and all the other seeming comforts of existence, sometimes have put a termination to it. They know, that on a bed of sickness the
struggles

struggles of departing life have many times more *apparent pangs*, and generally a much longer duration, than they observe in the execution of a criminal. These ideas are not complex; they rush into the minds of the thoughtless, and disseminate their baneful influence upon the hearts of the profligate. The laws of ENGLAND themselves seem to acknowledge the propriety of this observation: they allow, that frequent spectacles of misery, make man callous to it, and for this *very* reason they exclude BUTCHERS from the right of JURORS. * * *

If the ignominy of a public punishment be the principal intention of the law; we may remark, that *shame* is attached to *crime*; and, that a more lenient punishment would have the same end on the mind of man, and a better influence on the morals of society. There are, according to MONTESQUIEU, two sorts of corruption; the first, when the people do not observe the laws; the second, when they are corrupted by the laws *themselves*; the last he considers an alarming evil, because it proceeds from the intended remedy.

To

To pursue this reasoning with energy, it will be necessary to take the language as well as the sentiments of the acute and sagacious author *de l'Esprit des loix* in his close and critical investigation of the power of punishments.*

“ Ex-

* L'experience a fait remarquer que dans les pais où les peines sont douces, l'esprit du Citoyen en est frappé comme il l'est ailleurs par les grandes.

Quelque inconvénient se fait-il sentir dans un Etat ? un gouvernement violent veut soudain le corriger ; & au lieu de faire exécuter les anciennes loix, on établit une peine cruelle qui arrête le mal sur le champ. Mais on use le ressort du Gouvernement ; l'imagination se fait à cette grande peine comme elle s'etoit fait à la moindre ; & comme on diminue la crainte pour celle-ci l'on est bientôt forcé d'établir l'autre dans tous les cas. Les vols sur les grands chemins étoient communs dans quelques états ; on voulut les arrêter ; on inventa le supplice
de

“ Experience (says he) has shewn,
 “ that in countries where punish-
 “ ments

de la rouë qui les suspendit pendant quelque tems. Depuis ce tems, on a volé comme auparavant sur les grands chemins.

De nos jours la désertion fut très fréquente ; on établit la peine de mort contre les déserteurs, & la désertion ne fut pas diminuée : la raison en est bien naturelle ; un soldat accoutumé tous les jours à exposer sa vie, en méprise ou se flatte d'en mépriser le danger. Il est tous les jours accoutumé à craindre la honte ; il falloit donc laisser une peine qui faisoit porter une flétrissure pendant la vie ; on a prétendu augmenter la peine & on l'a réellement diminuée.

Il ne faut pas mener les hommes par les voyes extrêmes ; on doit être ménager des moyens que la nature nous donne pour les conduire. Qu'on examine la cause de tous les relachemens, on verra qu'elle vient de l'impunité des crimes, & non pas de la modération des peines.

Suivons la nature, qui a donné aux hommes la honte comme leur fleau ; & que la plus grande partie de la peine soit l'infamie de la souffrir.

Que

"ments are mild, the mind of the
"citizen is as sensibly affected by
"them as where they are great.

"If an inconvenience be felt in a
"state, a violent government will
"correct it suddenly; and instead of
"thinking

Que s'il se trouve des Païs où la honte ne soit pas une
suite du supplice, cela vient de la Tyrannie qui a infligé
les mêmes peines aux scélérats & aux gens de bien.

Et si vous en voyez d'autres où les hommes ne sont
retenus que par des supplices cruels, comptez encore
que cela vient en grande partie de la violence du Gouverne-
ment qui a employé ces supplices pour des fautes légers.

Souvent un Législateur qui veut corriger un mal ne
songe qu'à cette correction; ses yeux sont ouverts sur
cet objet & fermés sur les inconvéniens. Lorsque le mal
est une fois corrigé, on ne voit plus que la dureté du
Législateur; mais il reste un vice dans l'état que cette
dureté a produit, LES ESPRITS SONT CORROMPUS.

" thinking on the execution of an-
 " cient laws, it adopts a severe punish-
 " ment which stops instantly the pro-
 " gress of the evil. But the spring
 " of government hereby loses its elas-
 " ticity; the imagination reconciles
 " itself to the great punishment, as
 " it had done previously to the small;
 " and as fear is diminished for the
 " first, it becomes necessary to adopt
 " the other in all cases. High-way
 " robberies were common in some
 " States; they wished to prevent them;
 " they invented the punishment of
 " breaking upon the wheel, which
 " checked the evil *some time*. Since
 " that

“that time, high-way robberies are
“as common as ever.

“In our own days, desertion was
“very frequent; the punishment of
“death was assigned to deserters, and
“desertion was not diminished. The
“reason of it is natural; a soldier ac-
“customed every day to expose his
“life, despises, or affects to despise
“the danger of it. He is every day
“accustomed to fear shame; it
“therefore became necessary to fix a
“punishment which would make him
“bear a disgrace during his life; with
“the intention of encreasing the pu-
“nish-

“ nishment, mankind have really di-
 “ minished it.

“ People are not to be hurried by
 “ violent measures ; we should use
 “ with prudence those means which
 “ nature gives us to lead them. Let
 “ us examine the cause of all disor-
 “ ders ; we shall see that it proceeds
 “ from the impunity of crimes, and
 “ not from the moderation of punish-
 “ ments.

“ Let us follow nature, who has
 “ given men *shame* for their *scourge* ;
 “ and let the greatest part of their
 “ suffer.

"sufferings be the infamy of enduring them.

"If there are countries where shame be not the necessary consequence of sufferings, it proceeds from the TYRANNY which has inflicted the same punishments on the profligate and respectable part of mankind.

"And if you see others, where men seem kept in awe by severe punishments, be also assured that it proceeds in a great measure from the violence of the government,
"which

“ which has employed these punish-
 “ ments for slight faults.

“ A Legislator who wishes to cor-
 “ rect an evil, thinks often *alone* on
 “ this correction; his eyes are *open*
 “ to the *object*, and *closed* to the in-
 “ *conveniences* of it. When the evil is
 “ once corrected, we then see nothing,
 “ but the severity of the Legislator;
 “ but there remains a vice in the
 “ State which this severity has pro-
 “ duced; THE MINDS OF THE PEO-
 “ PLE ARE CORRUPTED.”

This is not the language of hypo-
 thesis. The inference is as insepa-
 rable

able from the fact, as *light* is from the *sun*. It will be needless to seek for proofs where the reasoning, if erroneous, is so easily detected. Men who follow accurately this train of thinking, will, without doubt, admit the force of the preceding observations; and those who, disinclined to close examination, have established the maxim that "great authorities are great arguments," will give, with confidence, their judgment to the *respectable authority* of MONTESQUIEU.

To elucidate the nature of these reflexions, it will be in vain to return
to

to ITALY; for even after having pointed out the defects of our criminal punishments, it would be disgraceful to make an analogical connection of them with those of a country, so miserably destitute of a good code, and so notoriously careless of its just execution. To this we may still add the asylum of churches, which is in itself so glaring a profanation of the holy temples of the Deity, that it seems astonishing how any ecclesiastical power in the universe can submit to it, much less insist upon it as a special privilege.

We

We have had already occasion to notice the territorial division of ITALY, in relation to the financial poverty of its different States; and we may here partly ascribe to it the frequency of assassinations, and of other horrid murders.

The paradox will cease, when we reflect on the difficulty attending the seizure of the felon, from applications to magistrates under various jurisdictions, and on the superior activity of the terrified villain, to that of the permitted pursuit.

'Tis from the co-operation of these causes that ITALY is deluged with crimes, and that the assassins too often blusters in her streets with perfect impunity. We may also remark, that the inhabitants are very irritable, with a susceptibility of the most generous gratitude for a kind action, and of the most implacable revenge for an affront. This is the obvious virtue, and vice of their nature; and violent passions produce violent acts. A wise legislature would wish to counteract the endemic evil; but even this would

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be impossible, unless there were an unity of government in that country.

For internal regulation, TUSCANY and PIEDMONT are certainly entitled to the highest respect of all the Italian States. Among the laws of TUSCANY, there is one which decrees, that the seducer of a virgin shall be obliged to marry her, which is nearly conformable to the Levitical law.

This is certainly an equitable principle, and though it may be subject to abuse, it seems to originate in

the most scrupulous idea of justice. Indeed, the late Grand Duke of TUSCANY, LEOPOLD, has left behind him *in that* district the best of characters, as a legislator, sovereign, and father. He was a most respected luminary in a region of darkness.

With respect to the *penal laws* of ITALY; they are so very relaxed, that there seems scarcely a restriction upon murder itself. NAPLES is an eminent proof of it, a city containing three or four hundred thousand inhabitants, for the most part, more flagitious than any in EUROPE, where

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seldom a year passes without innumerable assassinations; and yet in this same city, a public execution is a public wonder!

So accustomed are the lower classes of people, in this place, to hear the recital of murder with indifference, that the following circumstance may be relied upon as authentic. A gentleman of NAPLES, in passing occasionally before the King's palace, had frequently noticed a man of singular appearance at work: he was chained to some others, and assisted in removing rubbish, and bringing

stones for a new building, the foundation of which had just been laid.—

The man, by having seen him often pass, recollected his person, and always took off his hat, as he found an opportunity. The gentleman, not knowing how to account for his attention, was induced one day to enquire the cause of his civility, and of his chains. To the first part of the query, in the Neapolitan style, he alledged that it was ‘*il suo dovere*’ ‘his duty’; and to the second—he said ‘he was in that predicament for ‘*una minchioneria*’ ‘a trifle’ ‘*Ho amaz-*

zata

zata solamenta una Donna, 'I have only,' said he, 'killed a woman.'

From anecdote we can sometimes abstract more just ideas of a nation, than from the delineation of the most descriptive pen; and the last gives a sufficient illustration of the levity, with which this wretch had been accustomed to think on taking away the life of a fellow-creature.

Irascible, jealous, and vindictive tempers, it is true, are principally observable in hot climates; 'tis *there* we must seek an OTHELLO or a

ZANGA:

ZANGA: and 'tis *there* particularly, that exemplary punishments should succeed flagrant offences.

The Magistracy of NAPLES is insensible to this necessity, or is regardless of its importance. In confirmation of it, the following narrative deserves attention. The case is well known in that City, and will exemplify by a particular fact, the propriety of thus reasoning on the subject we have just quitted.

An English Gentleman, resident at NAPLES, came to his native country

try some time in the year 1789. He was extremely attached to horse exercise, and, for the pleasure of using it, he had purchased, when in LONDON, a few fine horses. To have them well looked after at NAPLES, it was requisite also to take with him an English Groom. Thus accommodated, he proceeded through FRANCE to ITALY.

Arrived at NAPLES, his servant, a stranger to the Italian language, sought acquaintance. His speech was fettered: he knew not how to disclose his perceptions. He wished
for

for a friend in his dreary solitude, and became acquainted with an Irish soldier, in the service of his SICILIAN MAJESTY.

An intimate attachment generally takes place, where the opportunity of forming it is so difficult; and, though perfidy has always one of the deepest dyes of villainy, it was in this instance singularly atrocious. Whenever the soldier found his necessities pressing, he applied to this man. The money, that HE possessed came only from the scanty gleanings of his service; and he lent him at dif-
fe-

ferent times a few ducats, which were generally repaid after some little trouble.

The soldier had frequently urged his distress, when he found himself incapable of fulfilling his engagements, and the servant had not only the benevolence to wait for his convenience; but had even *himself* solicited a subscription for him from the English Factory at NAPLES.

About the month of February 1791, his master had some thoughts of returning to ENGLAND, and made
his

his servant acquainted with his intention. The poor fellow, unable to resist the entreaties of his supposed friend, had unfortunately at this time lent him his *little all*; it amounted to the sum of forty ducats. He was apprehensive that he should lose the money, if he came to ENGLAND without it; and therefore earnestly pressed him for payment. This circumstance happened on a Wednesday, and the journey was to take place on the succeeding Wednesday. It was now impossible to temporize without danger of losing the money; and, as the Irishman had repeatedly promised,

mised, and failed in his punctuality, he found it now necessary, for the satisfaction of his creditor, to swear in the most sacred manner, that his debt should be paid the Monday following, which would have been two days previous to the man's departure.

—The servant, to enforce and secure the money at the appointed time, in answer to this protestation, only threatened that if the Monday should elapse without the promised payment, he would inform his Captain of it the Tuesday morning; and thus they separated.

It

It will be necessary to remark to those unacquainted with the buildings of NAPLES, that many families inhabit the same house, and that even the bed-chambers generally open in a sort of gallery, which people pass in common unnoticed. This was here the case; and about one o'clock in the morning of the Tuesday, a noise was heard at the bed-chamber of the servant, with a loud whisper, which bid him open the door. After a natural question 'who is it?' the voice replied, ' 'tis I, ' I am come to pay you the forty ducats I borrowed of you—open the door.'—The door

was

was opened—the MONSTER rushed in, and stabbed him in ten different places with his bayonet. The screams of the SERVANT, and his cry of ‘murder ! murder !’ in *English*, alarmed the inhabitants of the whole house.

—They come to the room from whence the sound proceeded, and find the poor Englishman weltering in the gore which had flowed from his mangled body. His stomach, and lungs were particularly perforated, and extravasated wind, and blood issued at the same time from his wounds.

A surgeon instantly attended—on viewing the miserable object, he lifted up a despairing eye and exclaimed ‘*Gesù maria è morto!*’ The poor creature had a sufficient knowledge of Italian to understand from the expression of the surgeon, that he was beyond the possibility of recovery, and had still existence enough to know and name the murderer.

The officers of justice repair to the soldier’s habitation;—they fly to his bed-chamber, which they burst open;—they go towards his bed,
and

and there they only see a French woman, who lived with this horrid miscreant. Satisfied by her assurances and their own eyes, that he was not in the house; they were returning: but, one of them having just discerned a bloody pair of breeches on the floor, they renew their search, and find under the bed a trap-door, and the trembling wretch concealed under it. They immediately take him into custody, and commit him to prison.

.With a fruitless hope of recovering the poor Englishman, he was

conveyed to the hospital; and for the purpose of convicting the assassin, it was necessary to establish a proof, which should be irrefragable. The tribunal of NAPLES is extremely cautious in admitting *the internal evidence of facts*, and particularly so, in judging of (what is termed in England) *collateral evidence*. Their criminal laws suppose, that predetermination frequently results from indignant feelings; and that other violent men, like the Judge in the melancholy case of CALAS, may connect probable circumstances with ease, and may reconcile even discordant circumstances with-

without much difficulty. This is the natural effect of premature judgment, from which few men are perfectly exempt.

To substantiate, therefore, the unquestionable criminality of the Irishman, five other soldiers were dressed in similar cloaths with himself, all in regimentals. The six men went round the bed of the Englishman at two different times, and at each time, the poor creature pointed out the murderer, without doubt, and without difficulty. After this he languished a few days and died.

It will be now useless to observe, that this wretch was a proper object for all the rigour of an avenging death; and yet, as his punishment, he was only banished for life to one of the neighbouring Islands of SICILY.

We see from this deplorable, and fatal lenity, that the Government of NAPLES does not sufficiently deter its inhabitants from the perpetration of murders by the vengeance of penal justice.

Ex-

Examples of terror are occasionally requisite for the peace of the community. They should indeed be as *seldom* as possible, for we have remarked that *frequency* lessens their *force* on the human mind. When *indispensably necessary*, they should be severe; but they ought always to be used with discrimination. To relax the discipline, relaxes the morals of society: To accustom mankind to spectacles of misery, petrifies their hearts: and to inflict the same punishment upon dissimilar offenders equalizes crimes.

It is happy for mankind, that there is a supplement to human laws. These in the best regulated country can only take cognizance of *overt* acts, and punish the delinquents, who are not sufficiently expert to elude the hands of justice. When ANACHARSIS came to ATHENS, finding SOLON employed in writing laws, he laughed at his undertaking, and at the absurdity of imagining that injustice could be prevented by them. They were, in his estimation, no better than spiders' webs, and would like them, hold only the weak and poor when they were caught;

caught ; but would be easily broken through by the rich and powerful.

The force of this truth is manifest ; but we may observe, that the salutary influence of the Christian religion assists *those written laws* ; and, even where it is most abused, is some check upon the wickedness of mankind. Auricular confession itself, and the consequent penance enjoined by the priest to the transgressor, may be no small prevention of crimes in ITALY. The most abandoned part of the inhabitants seldom omit this precept of the church, so accustomed

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ed are they to consider it, as one of the vital principles of their faith.

The Christian religion, upon its broad basis, certainly concurs to the same end with the magistrate, and in a more effectual manner. It inculcates on men the unceasing presence of an omniscient power ;—it allures them to the practice of every civil and moral duty, and it restrains them even from *thoughts* which may eventually terminate in *acts* of injustice.—This is its effect upon every part of mankind, and it carries in itself such incontestable proofs of Divine authority,

of rity, that extrinsic evidence seems almost unnecessary. In spite of the utmost cavils of scepticism, would it be possible, that a religion, unassisted by the Deity himself, could in so short a time have destroyed the bigotted prejudices of pagan ignorance, and the boasted philosophy of the Augustan age?

We must however allow, that Christianity in ITALY shews a different complexion from what we usually contemplate in the New Testament, or in the earliest writings of the Fathers. In *these* we do not hear
of

of sacerdotal robes, of monastic vows, of splendid processions, or of high mafs, and it will be of no avail to fay that fome of thefe are the external covering, not the *nucleus* of the Romifh faith; for the ignorant multitude miftake the one for the other. —Is it not true that in every Roman Catholic country, we find them not only invoking the mediatory fuppliations of faints, but addreffing to them prayers little fhort of adoration.

We are not fpeaking of the nice diftinctions of the liberal, but of the coarfe acceptations of the vulgar.—

It

It is the last which forms the bulk of mankind. It was by worshipping symbols of one God, and reverencing the MANES of departed heroes, that they were once seduced into idolatry and Polytheism; and it will not be necessary to deduce from this argument a *possible relapse*, for we observe the FACT ITSELF in ITALY.

The Synods, which have been convened to fix the Creed of the Church of ROME, (though they may *flatter* themselves with having justified many of her dogmas,) still leave her practices open to reprehension.

The

—The ruling powers themselves participate in the common shame; and, far from discouraging superstition or credulity, take the most decided method to promote them. How are we otherwise to account for the constant influx of so many thousands of pilgrims, who annually resort for indulgences to the holy house of LORETTO, THAT EMINENT MONUMENT OF DELUSION? How are we otherwise to account for the flights of hand played so frequently at NAPLES by audacious priests, in the pretended liquefaction of the blood of St. JANUARIUS? We cannot suppose, that
any

any man of sound intellect is sincere in the belief of these absurdities, for a head formed to receive them, would be an object of *compassion*, not of censure.

It is from the degraded picture of religion in this country, that it swarms with infidels. Italians even of the more instructed classes of society, have so connected the practices of Popery with the principles of Christianity, that in abandoning the one, they despise the other. The human understanding so long insulted, grows impetuous ; and passes from extreme
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to extreme. Even the precaution of the magistrate is ineffectual, and people read those writings, which are the most particularly interdicted.— Indeed a marked condemnation of any book, is a strong incentive to peruse it, and hence we find French translations of HOBBS, BOLINGBROKE, and HUME, with the original works of VOLTAIRE, dispersed throughout all ITALY. In vain we hear from many of their pulpits ‘Guai a quelli che hanno letto VOLTAIRE’! ‘Wo to those who have read VOLTAIRE.’ This is the very temptation to read him; and it is unfortunate,

nate, that *this* should be the author, whom these priests so generally select for abuse, as he is certainly the most likely to mislead the multitude. His peculiar manner of enforcing argument, where he has *any*; and the vivid flashes of his ridicule, which he always employs where he has *none*, render him singularly dangerous to the superficial part of mankind. Of all the writers of the two last centuries, he has been the most universally read; and his tracts against the Christian religion have done the greatest injury.

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The works of SOCINUS, (though a Tuscan) are scarcely known in ITALY, nor are they much esteemed on the Continent. Deists and Latitudinarians *themselves* condemn him, as a very disingenuous Polemic, in distorting most violently texts of scripture, to serve a predetermined hypothesis. Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists insist, that it would be more candid to reject *entirely* the authority of the Old and New Testaments, than to put such forced constructions upon them, as is observable in his writings. Nothing they

they say, can acknowledge the singularity and novelty of his interpretations more completely than his own words, in commenting upon the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, where he admits '*quid aulem hoc loco sibi velit Johannes, à nemine quod sciam adhuc rectè expositum fuit !*' All parties, however, allow him to be a man of strong intellectual powers, unhappily applied. We may certainly presume, that his expositions of the Sacred Writ in general, and of St. John's Gospel in particular, are wrong; for, if these opinions had not been new in the annals of Christianity, we should,

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without doubt, have found them
unequivocally admitted in the early
writings of the Fathers. According
to ADDISON'S ESTIMATE OF EVI-
DENCE, "there were four persons
"eminent for their lives, their wri-
"tings, and their sufferings, that were
"successively contemporaries, and
"bring us down as far as the year
"of our Lord 254. St. JOHN, who
"was the beloved Disciple, and con-
"versed the most intimately with our
"Saviour, lived till Anno Domini
"100. POLYCARP, who was the
"disciple of St. JOHN, and had con-
"versed with others of the Apostles
"and

" and Disciples of our Lord, lived
 " till Anno Domini 167, though his
 " life was shortened by martyrdom.
 " IRENÆUS, who was the disciple of
 " POLYCARP, and had conversed with
 " many of the immediate disciples
 " of the Apostles, lived, at the low-
 " est computation of his age, till the
 " year 202, when he was likewise cut
 " off by martyrdom ; in which year
 " the great ORIGEN was appointed
 " Regent of the Catechetic School
 " in ALEXANDRIA, and as he was
 " the miracle of that age for industry,
 " learning, and philosophy, he was
 " looked upon as the champion of

“ Christianity till the year 254, when,
 “ if he did not suffer martyrdom, as
 “ some think he did, he was certainly
 “ actuated by the spirit of it, as ap-
 “ pears in the whole course of his life
 “ and writings; nay, he had often
 “ been put to the torture, and had
 “ undergone trials worse than death.
 “ —As he conversed with the most
 “ eminent Christians of his time in
 “ EGYPT and in the East, brought
 “ over multitudes both from heresy
 “ and heathenism, and left behind
 “ him several disciples of great fame
 “ and learning, there is no question
 “ but there were considerable num-
 “ bers

OF ENGLAND AND ITALY. 69

“bers of those who knew him, and had
“been his hearers, scholars, or pro-
“felytes, that lived till the end of
“the third century, and to the reign
“of CONSTANTINE the Great.

After the explanatory writings of
Authors, so near the apostolic age,
one would think, that there were no
doctrines of consequence reserved
till later periods, for the discovery of
any THEOLOGICAL COLUMBUS.—
*By denying the authenticity of divine re-
velation, a man has no higher jurisdic-
tion, than his own reason ; 'tis in this
case, the only guide he can trust to :*

but *by receiving it*, he follows a path, which is marked out for him, and from which he cannot deviate consistently with his first design. In all doubtful cases arising from the obscurity of sacred texts, the best evidence, in the nature of things, that can be procured, is the supplemental evidence of the EARLIEST WRITERS; for *they* must be the best acquainted with the spirit of the original Authors, and are the least likely to mislead mankind.

It is not with the ECCLESIASTICS of ITALY, that we can expect to rea-

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son on theology. They are too much in the trammels of bigotry, and superstition, to give or receive information, and a very slender education will qualify them for ordination, and their professional duties. Among the PEOPLE, we have already remarked, that the pervading characteristic is *mental indolence*, with those unconscious and frequent exhibitions of genius, which indicate a rich, and neglected soil. A vigorous mind will, sometimes, propel the possessor to study; and when we meet with a person of this description in that coun-

try,

try, we find in him a concentration of well digested information.

From this, we may easily judge of the influence of a particular religion upon society at large. There are some men not swayed by local custom, or local prejudices; but a great degree of intellect and fortitude, are requisite to overcome them. TRUTH has notwithstanding irresistible charms to the man who imagines he has found HER; and the direful horrors of the inquisition itself, could scarcely stifle the voice of GALILEO. For-

tunately

tunately for NEWTON, and for the WORLD, HE WAS BORN IN ENGLAND, and permitted not only to cultivate, but to display to mankind the glorious exertions of HIS wonderful abilities.

It is however clear, that the power of the Romish Hierarchy has been for years declining, in proportion with the increasing knowledge of her members. Her BULLS and ANATHEMAS are now become ridiculous, her JESUITS are exterminated, and her INQUISITION is nearly abolished. It will not be hazardous to vaticinate her fall; this cannot be at any great distance,

distance, for she is reduced already to
a PHANTOM, a "*vox et præterea
nihil.*"

" A violent cross wind ———

" Blows *her* transverse ———

" Into the devious air : *now may ye see*

" Cows, hoods, and habits, with their wearers
toft,

" And flutter'd into rags ; *and* reliques, beads,

" Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,

" The sport of winds :

A man of sense will receive no
small pleasure in quitting this *mere-
tricious figure* of RELIGION, with all
her PHYLACTERIES, MADONNAS,

BAM-

BAMBINOS, GENUFLEXIONS, and PROCESSIONS, to behold the more dignified appearance she makes in this KINGDOM. *Here* we find her, neither negligent of decent garb, nor lavishly adorned: FAITH, HOPE, and CHARITY, are the INMATES of her SANCTUARY; REASON and REVELATION confederate at her ALTAR. She has freed herself from the Superstition, but has retained the Decorum of her TEMPLES.—She *still* approves of the “high embowed roof,” with its antique and massy pillars,—of the “storied windows” with the mellow’d light, which
streams

streams from its painted panes, and she *still* delights to hear the PEALING ORGAN swell the Note of Adoration; but she has thrown off the mummeries of flaunting Ceremony, and the absurdities of mistaken Devotion.

The conduct of the Church of ENGLAND in her separation from that of ROME, was the result of moderation. She well knew that reformers, who wish to avoid the defects they witness, generally fall into opposite errors. She was therefore scrupulous in the act of reformation.—

She

She was at first cautious to ascertain the boundaries of her creed, but was afterwards sedulous to preserve them inviolate. She was conscious, tho' the Old and New Testaments contained every precept necessary to salvation, that there have been various methods of interpreting, what were apparently, the most clear and obvious texts of scripture. This has constituted no small part of the separations, which began in the early ages of Christianity, which have continued to this period; and which will never terminate, till all mankind shall have the *same intellectual*

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conception from reading the *same words*.

There can be no doubt, but that every man, who follows *conscientiously* and *sincerely* the dictates of his own reason, acts in perfect unison with the intention of his Creator; it will be only incumbent on him to direct *that reason* to its proper channel.—

Let him sift and examine as much as he pleases evidences, before he fixes upon them the foundation of his faith: but let him afterwards remember, that the power of his mind is very limited; that, though it may be sufficiently strong to compare, reject, or admit the testimony of revelation,

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it has not sufficient force to know *of itself*, any thing more concerning the nature of the Deity, than that he is ALL-WISE, ALL-GOOD, and ALMIGHTY. It seems clear from the scriptures, and from the earliest comments on them by the fathers, that he has three hypostatic distinctions, though one in essence; and it appears indubitable, that as long as mankind can fix any *general* idea to the same expressions, it will be the prevalent opinion among Christians.

The doctrine of a TRINITY of PERSONS in the GODHEAD, has,
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however, met with great opposition from the pen of DOCTOR PRIESTLEY; but it has been most powerfully defended in all the high principles of orthodoxy, by the invincible arguments of the present BISHOP of ST. DAVID'S, (DOCTOR HORSLEY). It is no small satisfaction for a humble enquirer after truth, whilst he observes the strong prepossessions of *two great men*, to follow them from the contrariety of their opinions, through the avenues which lead to them, to mark how the same *data* affect the operation of different minds, and to form an impartial judgment

ment from the pleadings of two ABLE ADVOCATES. It is a happiness, which hitherto has been known alone in ENGLAND, and it is one of the noblest banquets for intellectual enjoyment. Whatever advantage we contemplate in this Island owes no small part of its origin to the freedom of discussion, which the press allows; and which can never be too much indulged, as long as it does not degenerate into obloquy and illiberal invective; it was therefore well said, that *that* system must be built of very bad materials, which can be battered down by paper shot.

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It is here remarkable, that notwithstanding the many sects of Christians in GREAT-BRITAIN; and which are the inevitable consequence of free opinions in disputed doctrines, there is no country on the earth where there are more *positive* acts of religion. They do not indeed consist of rich shrines, or votive tablets consecrated to particular saints, but of efficient charity applied to every purpose of Philanthropy. A HOWARD, a HANWAY, and a WILBERFORCE, in doing justice to themselves, have done honour to their country, and must even receive applause

plause from the men, who think their judgments misguided. Hearts so rich in all the fine feelings of human nature command the utmost veneration; and contribute to the glory of the island full as much as the imagination of a SHAKESPEARE, or the intellect of a LOCKE.

Amidst innumerable instances of benevolence, the public hospitals of ENGLAND deserve peculiar attention: they are in no other part of the world so general, so convenient, and so well regulated. To enter the infirmaries of FRANCE or ITALY, is

to plunge one's self into a gulph of contagion. Two or three poor squalid wretches in the same bed, and filthy rooms, reeking with the pestilential *effluvia* of diseased lungs, form the spectacle of those mansions of misery; and present a hideous contrast to the hospitals of this kingdom. *Here* we see cleanliness, accommodation, and particular care to keep each individual in separate beds; more attention is paid to the patient; nor is he so frequently consigned to destruction, by the fatal pursuits of a bungling *experimentalist*.

If

If we reflect on the general care, which is taken of the poor, by the internal regulations of this kingdom, we shall find that it gives as liberal an allowance to them, as can be consistent with the practice of a nation, which would excite industry by discouraging idle poverty. It is therefore a matter for observation, and to the honour of the people of ENGLAND that a public, and compulsory contribution seems scarcely to lessen their bounty to objects of charity. Alms-houses, charity-schools, and other particular instances of benevolence, are nowhere more frequent than in ENG-

LAND, notwithstanding the large burthens, with which individuals are charged for the obligatory maintenance of the poor.

In respect to *late institutions*, established for the purpose of enlightening the lower classes of mankind, they have met with some objection, upon the presumption, that they diffuse too widely the rudiments of a learning, which these can never expect to bring to maturity; and, which is impeded by a variety of counter-acting circumstances. The opposers of similar *institutions* are inclined to think,

think, "that a little *learning* is a dangerous thing,"—that it may rob the inferior departments of an order of people as requisite, and indeed more so to the welfare of the community, than philosophers themselves. They know, that a human being generally applies it, or attempts to apply it, to the advancement of his own happiness. They apprehend, that, according to the acceptation of the "million," happiness results principally from riches ; and consists in an equality of condition with those who are considered their superiors, according to the received ideas of

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subordination. Thus, they contend, that making learning itself *too common*, is a cause, which saps indirectly, but eventually, the various gradations of society; and, that it is both fruitless and impolitic to disseminate its influence too widely among mankind: Fruitless, because they have not leisure well to digest it; and impolitic, because they would generally derive from it but a feeble light; and would be thereby rendered dissatisfied with the station of life they are destined to fill.

This

This principle of *generalizing* learning may, with reason be apprehended, in some degree, to obstruct the welfare of society. It may lead to a system, which even the most infuriate republican might dread; for, whatever distinctions may have place in his own mind; the multitude, in case of a state-convulsion, would neither see them, nor wish to see them.

Equality, in its obvious sense, is opposite to every palpable and visible object of nature. There are such marked, and such partial perfections and

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imperfections in all the classes of the creation, that the idea attached to any determinate meaning for levelling the capacities or situations of mankind is an absolute nullity. Can any man, with a well organized head, be of opinion, that there is not the same specific distinction between a strong and weak mind, as between a strong and weak body? It is true, that men add to the force of their minds by well applied study; and it is also true, that they add to the force of their body by well applied labour. Few people, it is to be believed, will be disposed to militate
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this position. The modifications of the same principle essentially diversify the orders of society. The powers of some men are admirably adapted to contrive, of others to execute.—Excellent mechanics in theory, may be miserable workmen in practice; not indeed from an accidental combination of circumstances, but from the radical, hereditary, and inherent principle of nature. Some by their mental faculties, seem formed to command, others to obey; and, tho' in particular instances we may observe the reverse of this proposition, they are for the most part *those instances*

stances of exception, which confirm the general rule. A MÆCENAS may sometimes be wanting to cherish merit, or in the words of a celebrated modern poet,

“ To stretch his hand through poverty’s pale
gloom,

“ For drooping GENIUS sinking to the tomb ;

“ And lead the BLUSHING STRANGER into
day.

A strong uncultivated mind may sometimes not be known to the world, as well as it deserves to be : but still its powers are not entirely lost to notice. Though it cannot shine in

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Parliament, it glimmers in an Ale-house; and is proudly conscious of its superiority to that of its associates.

AN INEQUALITY of intellects, produces an INEQUALITY of circumstances. The thoughtful man saves wealth to procure assistance in the infirmities of old age, and to transmit it to his children; and the thoughtless man squanders it for want of the same reflexions. The offspring of the first are naturally wealthy, and those of the last, poor. Hence the original gradations of society.

It

It is true, that there is scarcely an old system of Government in EUROPE without some practical defects. The eye perceives them, and the judgment confesses them. There is, however, a danger in entering too often into disquisitions upon the primary right of the *Governor* and *Governed*. It is generally replete with mischievous consequences, and a *profligate* FAC-TION in any monarchy, *might* make this *canvassed* point a PRETEXT for the most base and nefarious designs.

Every man of clear understanding must admit, that the right of sovereignty

reignty flows originally from the will of *a people*. It is this will, these collected rays, which give energy to the instrument of their CHOICE. The people of ENGLAND are strongly and judiciously attached to MONARCHY. In a large empire, it is impossible, in the nature of things, that a pure republic can long exist; a variety of DEMAGOGUES, all competitors for honours and emolument will inevitably start up, and signalize themselves. The *governed* naturally chose their favourite LEADER; popularity leads to tyranny; and thus the transition of a republic to a monarchy

narchy is one of the easiest in nature. To descend the hill, as it were, on the opposite side; it will be needless to remark, that tyranny teems with abuses, and sometimes rouses mankind to throw off its fetters.

A strong inquisitorial power too frequently exerted by the people, relaxes the sinews of Government; and a strong executive power, too frequently exerted by the Government, deducts from the force of the people. Unfortunately, we have hitherto seen in Europe, few large empires which have been pacifically inclined; and
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the cause of it seems imputable more to the ambition of Princes, and to the interests of Courtiers, than to the feelings of human hearts.

It therefore follows, (though monarchy be the most rational form of Government, both from the promptitude and energy, with which it executes; and from the easy succession of hereditary Princes, which precludes all the ill consequences of an ambitious competition for power,) that a certain spirit of democracy is a good corrective to it. Thus the monarch himself, the hereditary nobility which

surround the throne, and the delegates of the people, form a fine UNITY of government in ENGLAND.

In contemplating that of ITALY, the mind will receive but small improvement. TURIN and NAPLES exhibit only *miniatures* of monarchies; VENICE and GENOA, but feeble symptoms of proper republics; and indeed throughout the Italian territories, we distinguish the same peculiarity of features, whether they proceed from an aristocratic junto, or from a predominant potentate. It is the characteristic of these rulers to have

have *private* and *personal* advantages for *their* object; and as long as they carry this point undisputed, their subjects may do as they please.

The people of ITALY appear passive at present, under all these circumstances; their own regulations result curiously and accidentally from themselves; and they seem virtually to say to the reigning powers, as the French merchants once did to the celebrated COLBERT (when he wished to favour commerce by a system of particular measures) “*Laissez nous faire pour cela,*” Leave us alone for
G 2 that.

that. Thus the STILETTO, as an ingenious traveller has recently observed, forms the police of ITALY.

From PIEDMONT to the extremity of CALABRIA, we can only observe in society two classes of mankind, the high and the low; the first remarkable for the most overbearing insolence, the second for the most abject servility. No middle state seems to intervene between them, except in a few commercial Cities; where trade disperses and distributes property more equally, than in other parts of this country. It is, how-

however, this state of mediocrity, which is every where the best security against the violation of wealth ; because, by rendering it more general, it naturally forms a strong fence against the encroachments of the lower classes ; and it is fortunate even for the nobility of any country, where this dispersion of property is found.

Wherever this intermediate part of the community is wanting, there is no counteracting force to prevent extreme opulence from becoming the prey of extreme indigence, and the

poor must necessarily be by far the most numerous in all societies.

This truth, besides being in itself sufficiently manifest, will receive force from reflecting on the recent revolution of a neighbouring nation, which may serve to shew how indispensable a certain degree of general convenience, and comfort is to an *undisturbed peace* of society. A principle of equality as contended for by levellers is, as we have already remarked, an absurdity both in thought and deed; but such a glaring, such a preposterous inequality, as presents itself in

ITALY,

ITALY, is certainly pregnant with the most alarming consequences.

It carries with it the means of its own dissolution, and must of course correct itself upon the slightest opportunity. A small spark would kindle a flame amidst the oppressive misery of the Italian States; and it was probably this very consideration applied generally to Europe, which made ROUSSEAU disclose himself so forcibly in the third book of his *Emile*, where he appears to have foreseen the commotions, which have since been the object of universal attention.

Every

Every age has its appropriate character. The time has been when FRANCE aimed at universal monarchy, and the intention of LEWIS the fourteenth, in aggrandizing her power, may be pretty well guessed by the remarkable inscription of '*Dum totum impleat orbem*' which has lasted for so many years over the gateway of the LOUVRE.

Five and twenty millions of men in the center of EUROPE, using a language considered so indispensable to good education, must have some influence upon the opinions of mankind;

kind; and particularly so, upon the gloom of ignorance which pervades ITALY.

ENGLAND, indeed, can have but *little* to learn of FRANCE; it was from the bold writers of GREAT-BRITAIN, that AMERICA originally imbibed *her* principles of liberty; and it was from the collision of *these* great bodies, that FRANCE discovered those scintillations, which may eventually terminate in her *light*, or in her *destruction*.*

Nations

* Since these sheets were sent to the press, the French Revolution has been stained by an act, the
recital

Nations as well as individuals are the instruments of an omnipotent RULER and the vehicles of his unerring wisdom.

As simplicity of manners seems always encouraged in a republican,
and

recital of which freezes the warm blood of nature. A clement and amiable Monarch has been publicly murdered upon a scaffold in a city, which has been formerly so celebrated for humanity and *les bonnes mœurs*. The misfortunes of Lewis the Sixteenth seem to have originated in his virtues. He suffered for having been a Tyrant; and, had he *really* been a Tyrant, he would not have suffered.

In vain did the *illustrious* D'ESSE flatter himself to find a *pseudo-temple of liberty* the TEMPLE OF JUSTICE: it was impossible that this should be the case, where *accusers* were *judges*. That sacred BEING, who permitted the perpetration of the horrid crime, permitted it no doubt for those wise purposes, which are beyond the reach of human investigation.

and luxury in a monarchical government, it will not be foreign to our subject to make some reflections upon the prevailing taste of the latter throughout almost all EUROPE. It would be uncandid not to notice those vindications of it, which appear in a variety of authors, whilst we make some general observations upon its probable effect.

We have found it the decided opinion of the most eminent statesmen in ENGLAND, that articles of luxury are the fittest objects of taxation ; and

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as the follies of mankind usually predominate every where, it follows of course, that such taxes must be beneficial to national finance.

By taking, however, a fair estimate of the advantages and disadvantages of luxury in a State, we will endeavour to determine, whether upon a large and comprehensive scale, it adds to, or deducts from the happiness of the world. In granting the necessity, not merely of unequal fortunes, but of the *excessive* opulence and poverty, which are observable
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in modern EUROPE, we can easily imagine that some *active principle* is requisite to distribute from the superflux of the rich, to the want of the poor.

The benevolence of the heart is frequently stifled by affluence and prosperity, where the head is not accustomed to consider, that difference of stations are sometimes as transient as they are accidental, and that the common afflictions incident to human nature, may quickly sink the temporary happiness of an Emperor, beneath the lowest point of indigent misery.

The

The thinking being, whether high or low, rich or poor, must necessarily be a good member of the community. Supposing even that he should possess a heart in itself impenetrable to all the amiable feelings of humanity, he will naturally contemplate on the vicissitudes of things, which will always inculcate on him a desire to relieve distress, from a consideration, that he too may be subject to it.

But mankind are not meditative in a ratio with their wealth. It therefore becomes necessary, according to some,

some, to allure them to good actions, to render their own gratifications subservient to the happiness of others, and even to make their vanity itself felt as a *virtue*. Some French authors have observed, that every coxcomb is thus essentially conducive to the welfare of the community; and, that if we reflect even on the trifling object of a cambrick handkerchief, we shall perceive it. The original materials of which this is formed are not perhaps worth two-pence; its whole value may be therefore attributed to the labour of its manufacture; and, if we ascend to the higher,
and

and more censurable articles of luxury; the same principle will still hold good. Even the man who sends to FRANCE for *ortolans*, or to PIEDMONT for *truffles*, may probably maintain the messenger by his depravity.

That wealth is thus circulated, we can easily grant; and these being all the advantages derivable from luxury though found in many forms, and in various ways; it will now be right to take the opposite disadvantages, and see whether the one or the other preponderate. In reasoning upon the
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ject, we must qualify the term, and denominate *luxury*, not those things which are almost *assimilated to our wants* in civilized society; but merely the *excessive gratifications* of a wanton profusion.

We have endeavoured to prove, that inordinate affluence and poverty, such as we have remarked in ITALY, are both injurious to and dangerous in society, unless abundantly corrected by that state of *competence*, which is so very observable in ENGLAND. It will be necessary to our argument to assume these premises.

We see the fact, and from *this fact* are able to take the obvious inference.

Luxury, then, may be serviceable to the very high, and very low part of mankind. It may be advantageous to the *Prince* and the *Beggar*; because the most fantastic whims of the former may maintain the latter; but the melancholy truth is, that it annihilates that respectable order of the community, who (though not abounding in wealth) have notwithstanding a sufficiency for the conveniencies and comforts of life.

'Tis

'Tis these who catch this contagion from the higher ranks, and thus it becomes their destruction. 'Tis originally to this, we may ascribe the greater part of the highway robberies, forgeries, suicides, and other crimes so frequent in this kingdom. This is its general tendency in a moral sense.

It will now be regular to see its force in a civil sense; and here we have abundant matter for reflection.

No person will deny, that almost all the sages and philosophers, who

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have

have enlightened the world, have generally sprung from among the middle ranks of society. Here we shall find, that a man who has a taste for knowledge, and a head for study, can best exert himself. He has not, in so great a degree, the allurements of pleasure to divert him from thought, and a natural ambition incites him to distinguish himself in the orbit which he describes. His talents introduce him to the notice of the great, and with them, he possibly contracts a passion for these exquisite *agrémens*, which he can never subdue. He

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therefore becomes dependent on the great.

It seems to have been the intention of the old Court of FRANCE to use luxury as an engine of State, and to keep the learned in her interest by those artificial wants, which she gave them to corrupt them. We have, however, seen, that in FRANCE there were more geniuses than there were pensions to lavish; and this, with collateral circumstances and various abuses accelerated the revolution of that country.

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The names of MIRABEAU, and of others, who formed the memorable phalanx which overturned the ancient government, will obtrude themselves on our attention; and will present a new opportunity for tracing effects through the obliquities of secret causes.

It will be no further needful to dilate on the consequences of this baneful production of FRANCE.— It has destroyed the monarchy which has so particularly encouraged it; and which has furnished EUROPE

with

with such a host of writers to vindicate that pest of society.

We will, therefore, pursue our original subject, and remark, that, tho' the people of ITALY are eminently voluptuous, their pleasures consist more in the bustle and external pomp, than in the placid delights of life. The old and young are equally fascinated by ostentatious parade, and no age in that part of the world blunts the taste for it. Gaudy coaches, a legion of servants, and of running footmen, constitute their principal idea of happiness.

There

There are none of those family parties, and friendly meetings, which are so frequent and so pleasant in ENGLAND; none of those convivial clubs, where men associate to unbend their minds, and to discourse with freedom upon the interesting topics of the day. Frivolous conversation, temperate repasts, sleep, the CORSO, and the OPERA commonly succeed each other; and thus pass the day, the year, and the life of a modern Italian.

This proceeds of course from the inert state of the country, which may
be

be considered as a cypher in EUROPE.

In proportion as a nation ceases to be powerful, it naturally becomes pacific. Disunited, and disabled, as the states of ITALY are, the inhabitants cannot be supposed to experience those breezes and tempests, which rouse the sensibility of mankind in political atmospheres.

When there is nothing to alarm or to awaken the mind, it grows languid and degenerates into effeminacy.

Thus Man has flourished and dwined

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dled according to the influence of accidental causes.

An inevitable revolution, however, must soon change the entire countenance of things in that country,—SUCH A CHANGE as fortunately in ENGLAND is unnecessary ;—where (notwithstanding the abuses which are visible; and from which no human establishment is perfectly free), we enjoy the united blessings of liberty and order; and have so long and in so peculiar a manner, possessed the *summum bonum* of the SOCIAL SYSTEM.



